

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-07 IO-13 OC-06 CCO-00 OCL-00 MCT-01 /093 W

-----281544 072930 /47

R 280945Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4393

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0160

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: DISQUIET SPREADS AS INSURGENCY FLARES

1. ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEB 27, AN INSURGENT GUNMAN SHOT TO DEATH DR. GEBRETENSAE HAGOS AS HE WAS ESCORTING HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN FROM THEIR CAR TO CHURCH SERVICES AT ST. FRANCISCO. THE ASSASSIN THEN CALMLY WALKED AWAY. DR. GEBRETENSAI WAS A PROMINENT KEBELE REPRESENTATIVE FROM ADDIS ALEM AREA OF ASMARA, AND HE SERVED AS FINANCIAL ADVISOR TO THE ERITREAN REGION SPECIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. HE HAD GAINED NOTORIETY IN RECENT WEEKS BY ACTING AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE ASMARA KEBELES AT THE EPMG-SPONSORED DEMONSTRATIONS OF FEB 3 AND 10 AND THEREBY COMPROMISING HIMSELF

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WITH THE INSURGENTS. ASSUMING THERE ARE DEGREES OF ACCEPTABILITY IN POLITICAL MURDERS, THIS ASSASSINATION INSPIRED AN UNCOMMON DEGREE OF QUEASINESS AMONG ERITREANS WHO QUESTION THE PROPRIETY OF GUNNING DOWN A MAN IN FRONT OF HIS FAMILY ON THE WAY TO CHURCH.

2. AT 0130 HOURS THE MORNING OF FEB 28, A GROUP OF INSURGENTS

SLIPPED INTO ASMARA AND HIJACKED SIX TRUCKS LOADED WITH COMM-  
ODITIES FOR MASSAWA. ON THEIR ROUTE OUT OF TOWN THEY ENCOUNTERED  
EPMG TROOPS, SPARKING A 40-MINUTE FIREFIGHT THAT RAGED THROUGHOUT  
NORTHERN AND WESTERN SECTIONS OF ASMARA. AT 0430 HOURS EPMG  
GUNS, EMPLACED ON RECONNAISSANCE HILL, OPENED FIRE IN THE  
DIRECTION OF KEREN APPARENTLY IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS THAT THE  
STOLEN TRUCKS HAD BEEN DRIVEN OFF IN THAT DIRECTION.

3. THE MASSAWA CONVOY DEPARTED ASMARA ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY  
28 EXACTLY ONE WEEK AFTER THE LAST TRIP TO MASSAWA. THE TIMING  
OF THIS CONVOY WOULD SEEM TO CONFIRM THE RUMOR THAT THE EPMG  
FORCES HAVE AGREED TO ESCORT ONLY ONE CONVOY A WEEK MAY, IN FACT,  
BE ACCURATE. THE EPMG TROOPS' RELUCTANCE TO RISK THEMSELVES  
MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK IS SAID TO BE THE RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT  
WITH THEIR OFFICERS THAT THEY WILL ESCORT ONLY ENOUGH POL PRODUCTS  
FOR THE MILITARY NEEDS AND MINIMAL CIVILIAN REQUIREMENTS. THIS  
WOULD ENTAIL AVGAS, MOGAS, KEROSENE AND ONLY ENOUGH DIESEL  
FUEL TO PERMIT RESIDENTIAL LIGHTING. WHILE STILL NOT CERTAIN,  
THIS MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE EPMG MILITARY'S FEB 10 ORDER TO SUSPEND  
INDUSTRIAL POWER.

4. COMMENT: THE FIREFIGHT AND THE ASSASSINATION HAVE AGAIN HEIGHTENED  
TENSIONS IN ASMARA AFTER SIX WEEKS OF RELATIVE CALM IN THE CITY.  
THESE INCIDENTS COMBINED WITH THE ONE EXTERNAL LAND LINK BEING  
LIMITED TO ONE ROUNDTRIP PER WEEK HAS MADE THE SITUATION IN ASMARA  
APPEAR ALL THE MORE TENUOUS.  
WAUCHOPE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DISQUIET SPREADS AS INSURGENCY FLARES  
**TAGS:** PINS, ET, (HAGOS, GEBRETENSAE)  
**To:** STATE ADDIS ABABA  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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